



Speech by

Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY AMENDMENT BILL

Mr HART (Burleigh—LNP) (10.39 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Queensland Art Gallery Amendment Bill 2012. This bill is quite straightforward. It is purely about corporate governance. This is something that those opposite—the Labor Party, the former government—have a very bad history of. We only have to look at the Health payroll system and the \$1.2 billion that was wasted there to know that those opposite do not know anything about corporate governance.

Ms TRAD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I do not think the member is being relevant to the long title of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! The point of order is overruled. I call the member for Burleigh.

Mr HART: In 2007-08 the Auditor-General had a close look at the Art Gallery Foundation's legal status. He reported that there was an increased risk of noncompliance with laws and regulations which could unnecessarily expose the government, the board and the employees to legal challenge. He went on to recommend that the Queensland Art Gallery Board of Trustees 'urgently review the legal basis for the foundation and take all necessary action to ensure that it complies with all relevant laws and regulations'. That was five years ago.

We have heard the members opposite—we have heard the member for South Brisbane and the member for Bundamba—speak here in this place. They did not talk about the bill; they talked about members' speeches. They have sniggered and they have laughed, but they have not looked at this bill. They had five years to do something about this, and what did they do? Absolutely nothing. During that time, the hardworking staff, volunteers and board members were exposed to legal action because of the incompetence of the former government. We have seen in a very short period of time our new minister come in here, put this piece of legislation to the House and get it passed. That is something the previous government were incapable of doing. So I commend the minister for that.

This bill seeks to amend the Queensland Art Gallery Act 1987 to allow the Art Gallery Board of Trustees to establish a foundation committee, featuring both existing board members and non-board members, to enable them to carry out the vital activities of the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation. It is important to state that the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation has been dedicated to the development of the gallery's collection and its very diverse exhibition program since its establishment in 1979. Over this time the foundation has raised over \$75 million from the support of memberships, donations, bequests and cultural gifts. In the 2010-11 period alone, the foundation raised over \$2 million from these avenues.

To be able to meet the objectives of the bill, the functions of the board will be extended to include developing the Art Gallery's collection of works. The board will be able to establish a foundation committee to carry out the necessary work of the foundation. I understand that the minister will move amendments during consideration in detail to allow the board to determine membership of the foundation committee and conditions of those memberships. The board will also be able to determine the name, constitution and procedures for the committee and to delegate its powers to the foundation committee to raise funds in the fulfilment of the board's functions. This bill will also extend civil liability protection to committee members to

the same extent as that provided to board members—again, something that those opposite completely ignored in their speeches.

The foundation committee will undertake the activities of the Art Gallery Foundation in a most reasonable and appropriate way to ensure regularisation of the status of the foundation and to limit the restrictions placed on the foundation to receive and deal with bequests and donations. Through this approach the board will be able to retain control over the management and operations taking place in the foundation and it will also avoid the need to create a new government body for the foundation.

During the formation and development of the bill, the Queensland Art Gallery management, the Art Gallery Board of Trustees and the foundation council were all consulted. Now there is a word that the former government did not know existed I am sure, because as far as consultation was concerned they never bothered to talk to anybody about this. These people have been consulted. They fully agree with the bill that is before us, and we are getting on with it in a very short space of time.

The amendment of the Queensland Art Gallery Act 1987 has been created to ensure that no additional costs are incurred as a result of its application and there will also be no financial impacts on the board under the new structure. I commend the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts for her quick work in bringing this amendment before the House. I happily commend the bill to the House.